

2010, I am not recorded because I was absent because I gave birth to my baby daughter. Had I been present, I would have voted, "yea."

**MEDICARE AND MEDICAID
EXTENDERS ACT OF 2010**

SPEECH OF

HON. RUSH HOLT

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 9, 2010

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 4994, the Medicare and Medicaid Extenders Act, which would provide a one year extension for Medicare reimbursement rates for physician services.

The Balanced Budget Act of 1997 established a new way to determine Medicare physician payments: the Sustainable Growth Rate, SGR, formula. Since 2002, this formula has called for an automatic decrease in Medicare physician payments each year, potentially limiting physician access for Medicare patients. The formula goes beyond Medicare and also affects TRICARE, the insurance plan for active and retired military personnel and their families, and its reimbursements for civilian physicians.

According to the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, there is a broad consensus that this physician payment formula is flawed. These parts of the Balanced Budget Act should not have been passed in the first place and should be repealed and rewritten anew. The health reform legislation passed by the House of Representatives last year, which I supported, included a provision that would have repealed and replaced the SGR formula with a new Medicare physician payment plan. Unfortunately, the final health reform bill that was signed into law did not include this provision, which would have been a permanent solution to the SGR formula.

Unless Congress acts, this formula would lead to a 25 percent cut in doctor's payments in 2011, discouraging many doctors from continuing to accept Medicare patients.

The Medicare and Medicaid Extenders Act would freeze the current rates for physician services through December 31, 2011, giving Congress time to work on a permanent solution. Further, this piece of legislation would extend the 5 percent increase in Medicare payments for mental health providers that is set to expire at the end of 2010. This provision would expand access to mental health care for millions of Medicare patients.

Additionally, this bill would extend funding for the special diabetes program through 2013. Without this bill, the special diabetes program, which funds 35 percent of all Federal research on Type I diabetes and supports research and prevention diabetes programs for Native Americans and Alaska Natives would expire at the end of 2011.

This bill is completely paid for by making small changes to the health reform law.

I am frustrated by these continuing short-term extensions. This is unfair to physicians who must plan their office budgets and unfair to patients who face unnecessary anxiety about the availability of the doctors on whom they depend. I will continue to advocate for legislation that eliminates the broken SGR for-

mula and replaces it with a system that fairly compensates physicians for treating Medicare patients. Until we have a new system, we must pass this one-year fix to ensure that American seniors and military families have the access to their physicians.

**HONORING J. DAVID COLFAX OF
MENDOCINO COUNTY**

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 14, 2010

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the civic accomplishments and dedicated public service of J. David Colfax who has served on the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors for the past 12 years.

As supervisor, educator and exemplary citizen his service has benefitted the ruggedly beautiful Mendocino County in northern California where he has lived with his wife Micki since 1973. He has served on many boards, committees and organizations including the Mendocino County Office of Education, First 5 Mendocino, the Economic Development and Finance Corporation, the North Coast Railroad Authority, the Criminal Justice Board Standing committee and the Local Agency Formation Committee.

David and Micki raised four sons whom they homeschooled on their Shining Moon ranch, where they built their own house and raised award winning goats. Their children went on to such universities as Harvard and Yale and all are working in professions that give back to others. David and Micki authored the book Home Schooling for Excellence which continues to inspire. And they wrote Hard Times in Paradise about their transition from their urban lives in the eastern United States to their rural ranch outside of Boonville not far from the Pacific Ocean.

During his three terms as a Mendocino County Supervisor, David has represented his geographically diverse district that ranges from the coast to 4,000-foot ridges to valleys and includes at least five watersheds. He has won the support of constituents who are entrepreneurs, fishermen and women, winemakers, brewers and mavericks of many persuasions. With a college professor style and animated discourse, David Colfax has served with passion and dedication.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, David Colfax has earned the admiration and respect of his peers, his community and his family. He is a friend and colleague whose legacy and contributions are long lasting in Mendocino County. For these reasons, it is appropriate that we honor J. David Colfax.

**IN RECOGNITION OF MR. MICHAEL
BLANDINA**

HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, December 14, 2010

Mr. PALLONE. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Michael Blandina, a resident of Brick Township, New Jersey and dedicated

member of the community. On October 30, 2010, Mr. Blandina retired from his position as Manager of the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission in Lakewood, New Jersey. He is also recognized for his work with various political organizations in Ocean County, including the Brick Township Democratic Municipal Committee where he serves as Chairman. Today, I applaud Mr. Blandina, as his achievements should serve as an inspiration to us all.

Mr. Blandina began his professional career as a Special Police Officer with the Brick Township Police Department in 1983. He valiantly served the constituents of Brick Township for seven years. In conjunction with his service as Special Police Officer, from 1985 through December 1999, Mr. Blandina served in the Tax Assessor's Office. His outstanding abilities and commitment were evident as he soon rose to the position of Principal Assessing Clerk. After approximately fifteen years of service to the Tax Assessor's Office, Mr. Blandina soon accepted a position with the Administration Department where he assisted constituents with various local issues. His responsibilities also included coordinating media related events for the Township of Brick. During his tenure, Mr. Blandina also spent summers working in the Recreation Department, specifically assisting the Township Recycling Program. In June 2007, Mr. Blandina accepted a position as Manager of the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission in Lakewood, New Jersey. Throughout his professional experience, Mr. Blandina's generosity has undoubtedly touched many lives and has helped countless people throughout central New Jersey.

Mr. Blandina is also a valued member of various local and political organizations. Since 1983, he has proudly served on the Brick Township Democratic Committee, eighteen of those years as Municipal Chairman. He has also served as Democratic Finance Committee Chairman and has dedicated his time to assisting the Ocean County Young Democrats. Similarly, Mr. Blandina has assisted with the Ocean County Columbus Day Parade Committee, one of the largest parades and ethnic festivals in the state of New Jersey. His other affiliations include the Ocean County Saint Patrick's Day Parade Committee, The Girls Scouts of the Jersey Shore Awards Reception Committee, Brick Township Democratic Club, among others. Mr. Blandina continues to mentor, exemplifying confident leadership and management skills.

As a result of his outstanding service, Mr. Blandina has been the recipient of numerous awards. He has received Brick Township Democratic Club's "1999 Democrat of the Year" award and the Columbia Civic League of Ocean County's "1999 Man of the Year" award. He has also been the recipient of the Heritage Festival Ball Committee's "2003 Outstanding Ethnic Leader" award and Brick UNICO Chapter's "2004 Italian American of the Year" award.

Madam Speaker, please join me in acknowledging Mr. Blandina's multiple years of service to the Ocean County community. His dedication and commitment are positive examples of what steadfast determination and hard work can accomplish.